

## **April 2002**

Attendees and Area Announcements listed after minutes.

### **HQE DEHS Director Transition**

Kelly has been named the Acting Director, Division of Environmental Health Services, and while Alan continues to be the Deputy Director, he has also been named the Acting Injury Prevention Program Manager. There will be a transition in HQ while Alan gets up to speed on the Injury Prevention Program and Kelly does the same with the General EH Program. Kelly said that she has asked the Injury Prevention Specialists to begin contacting Alan on Injury Prevention Issues and if the contact is by email, "cc" her. She asked the DEHS Directors to begin contacting her on General EH issues and "cc" Alan until they both work through the transition. They are meeting regularly to speed up the process.

Because HQ positions at a GS-13 or above are under a hiring control, approval for filling those vacant positions needs to come from the Secretary of the Department. The Director's position was granted a waiver before it was advertised, but because it took so long to fill, the waiver was used for another position within OEHE. This action requires another waiver to be obtained before the position can be officially filled, so Personnel's selection of a Director is tentative and Kelly will be Acting until it is approved.

## **General Environmental Health Topics**

### **Facility Code Definition Finalization**

Alan hadn't received much comment on the suggested changes to the facility code definitions, so he reminded everyone that we needed to finalize those. All comments should be sent to Kelly by April 26. After the final version is compiled, Darren will replace the old definitions on WebEHRS with these new ones. Branch Chiefs will need to work with their staff to ensure they are familiar with them.

### **Status, Agency Promotion Recommendation Document**

Alan will try to get the comments received during the Directors' meeting in Oklahoma City into a final version by the end of the month, then he'll send the document out to the Directors for their comments. It was discussed that because the Commission Corps Liaisons were trying to do away with Agency Promotion Recommendations, all our work could be for nothing. There were questions about what would be used in its place and Paul Young said it would be up to the Promotion Boards to make all the decisions. Alan said that we should still work on the document whatever became of it, because 1) it wasn't a done deal yet, and 2) it was still an excellent career development tool.

### **DEHS RRM History Data Base**

There have been requests for HQ to create a document that would detail the changes over the years in the Area RRM Database and make it available as a report on WebEHRS. Alan said that there are three factors that appear to be driving the apparent increase in the overall EHS RRM: 1) the change related to the new Institutional RRM methodology, 2) implementation of WebEHRS, which allowed Areas that hadn't kept up with their RRM to do so, and 3) there has been an actual increase in the number of facilities in many Areas. This report would allow us to look at trends over time within Areas and throughout the overall program. Darren said that he has the raw RRM for each Area back to 1994, but is having trouble deciphering the handwritten notes for 1992 and 1993. Once he gets these pulled together, he will make it available to the DEHS Directors on WebEHRS under the "Reports" section. Darren will send a notification out to everyone when that is available. He mentioned that this first attempt will be somewhat limited, but in time, he would be able to add filters and other features.

### **Env Scan**

Kelly asked Directors to notify members of the EHO PAC (Craig Shepherd, Kelly, Jeff Smith, Vince Garcia, Don Williams, and Deb Neilson) about Environmental Health activities going on in the field that the Surgeon General would need to know about. She said the CPO, Randy Grinnell, asks PAC members

to provide reports to him every two weeks. The next scan is due April 23. Some examples of these activities are: 1) the ATSDR meeting that is scheduled for April 24-25 at Gila River to discuss what CDC's National Center of Environmental Health and ATSDR should be doing in Indian Country. Fan Robinson was asked to participate in the meeting and be part of an Ad Hoc workgroup; and 2) the EHO PAC mailed a recruitment CD to all active duty EHOs in March. The video, which is the same as the CD version, was selected as a finalist for this year's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Telly Awards for the non-broadcast video category. Kelly said she would email the most recent scan to Directors so they could see what others had reported.

### **COSTEP Update**

COSTEP selections for this summer are almost complete. There is still time to place a student for this summer, if there are remaining COSTEP requests please let Alan Dellapenna know by April 19. Twenty-three Environmental Health and four - six Injury Prevention COSTEPs have been selected.

## **Injury Prevention Topics**

### **Struggling Infrastructure Grantee Status Report**

A conference call was held with UNC, our contractors to monitor and evaluate the 25 Infrastructure grantees. Based on the extensive work they have done with the grantees, they have identified 9 grantees as "struggling". Copies of the evaluation comments on the struggling grantees were sent to project officers and Area staff. Project officer's are requested to contact Alan to discuss if needed.

### **EMSC Pre-Conference in Dallas**

A pre-conference will be held this Sunday before the national Emergency Medical Services for Children State grantee meeting. HRSA asked IHS to conduct the pre-conference in an attempt to increase the partnership between IHS and EMSC.

### **National meeting in May**

Plans continue for the IHS injury prevention meetings scheduled for May 20-24 in Seattle. Monday and Tuesday will be the Fellowship Revision Committee and Level 2 Revision Committee meetings. The Tribal Steering Committee will meet all day on Tuesday, the Part 1 Grantee Workshop will be Wednesday and Thursday, and the Colloquium will be Friday morning. The Issues in Injury Control Course will be Monday through Thursday. Tribal Steering Committee members are invited to attend the Grantee Workshop and Colloquium. IHS Project Officers are expected to attend the Grantee Meeting and are invited to the Colloquium. Course Revision Committee members that are not Project Officers are not expected to stick around until the Colloquium. Kelly has said HQ will reimburse travel for Course Revision Committee members who are also Project Officers for the entire week. She will not reimburse travel for Project Officers only. Kelly reminded the Directors that the process for reimbursing Course Revision Committee and Tribal Steering Committee members' travel is separate from the process Bruce Chelikowsky uses to annually reimburse for OEHE activities. All approved travelers should submit copies of completed vouchers to her for reimbursement immediately after they are completed.

### **GPRA indicator Revision workgroup**

Work group members have been identified to advise in the revision of the national injury prevention GPRA performance indicators. The revised indicator will be presented at the national GPRA Workgroup meeting the end of April. There will be a conference call soon to discuss possible indicators.

## **Institutional EH Topics**

### **IEH Meeting**

The annual Institutional Workshop was held in San Diego February 18-22, 2002. Because Merritt was unable to participate on today's conference call, Kelly asked Richard Turner to provide a summary of that meeting. Richard said that the meeting was quite painful, but needed, to help the program get back on track. There are lots of activities going on in the field, but not much communication of those activities.

They spent the week doing some strategic planning, which resulted in the need to define the role and scope of the IEH program. They decided they needed to redefine the Steering Committee in hopes of making it more effective. They want to narrow their focus and priorities. Instead of having many competing priorities, they will now make WebCident their number one priority, and Ergonomics, Radiation Health, and Professional Development the numbers two – four priorities. They hope to implement pilot WebCident projects in some Areas by July 1 and begin fully implementing it in January 2003. Copies of presentations made at the meeting and meeting minutes will be posted on [www.dehs.ihs.gov](http://www.dehs.ihs.gov).

### **Emergency Preparedness Meeting at HQE**

Craig Shepherd provided a summary of the bioterrorism meeting that was held March 19 in Rockville. To make a long story shorter, the group wanted to produce one IHS document that detailed how we would respond to emergencies. Craig said Gene Robinson (IT) was to pull together everyone's Area-specific plans and produce one encompassing document. Gene was to get the first draft back to the group by the end of March and produce a final document sometime in June. After the meeting, a contingent of folks went to the Department to talk about funding IHS and tribes, in addition to states, for bioterrorism activities. The Department admitted to leaving out tribes, but promised to do better the next time around. Gary Hartz hopes that with enough funding, IHS would be able to fund one position to address emergency preparedness issues. There was some discussion about the questionnaire that went out asking if Areas had continuity of operations plans in place. The questionnaire was sent to Area Directors asking them to fill it out and return it to HQ by June. A number of the DEHS Directors weren't clear about what this plan should look like and had not seen the questionnaire. Kevin Meeks said he would send out a copy of the document to the Directors. Asked by some DEHS Directors if HQ would be providing a template for the Areas to use in drafting their plans, Kelly said they shouldn't hold their breaths. HQ has been working on theirs for some while, and they still don't have anything final yet. As a matter of fact, they haven't even been able to come up with building evacuation plans.

### **Vacancy Table Info**

Remember to update your vacancies and see vacancy postings at [www.dehs.ihs.gov](http://www.dehs.ihs.gov).

### **Next Call**

**May 9, 2002**, conference call numbers are the same for each call:

Dial In Number: **1-888-323-7711** (for all calls)

\* Pass Code: **90841** (for all calls)

## Participants and Area Announcements

**Aberdeen:** Dave Compton. Dave asked if the Head Start EH Representatives could be on future calls.

**Albuquerque:** Fan Robinson. Fan said she would be attending the ATSDR/CDC conference April 24 and 25 in Gila River and asked for recommendations to take with her. She also said that she and the Albuquerque Area SFC Director are working with EPA to put on a water survey training course for their staff. She invited others to contact her if they had staff that was interested in attending.

**Anchorage:** Jeff Smith, Tom Coolidge. Two Alaska staff were in Bemidji this week taking part in the Environmental Health Exchange Program that they created. They have applications from two individuals from Aberdeen Area and one from Bemidji Area to come to Alaska.

**Bemidji:** Bruce Etchison. The Chief position closed Monday and there wasn't a panel yet, but maybe by next week he'll hear something.

**Billings:** John Sery. No announcements.

**California:** Paul Young. No announcements.

**Nashville:** Craig Sepherd. Nashville is still waiting on departmental clearance to hold their OEHE Workshop in mid-May. There was some discussion as to how other Areas deal with these meeting requests. Some Areas are very strict about waiting for clearance while others aren't. Craig mentioned that the EHO PAC was trying to put together a recommended template for CVs. He would send out his first draft to DEHS Directors for comments and suggestions. Please get those to him by April 26.

**Navajo:** Not on the call.

**Oklahoma:** Kevin Meeks, Richard Turner. Oklahoma's first OEHE Workshop in 150 years is scheduled for the week of June 10. Fan volunteered to be a presenter. David Hogner was selected for the SUS position in Holton, Kansas, a combination SUS/IEH position in Shawnee closes April 22, and there will be a SUS position in Lawton coming soon.

**Phoenix:** Not on the call.

**Portland:** Al Knapp. No announcements.

**Tucson:** Quanah Nail. Tucson is advertising for an O-2/O-3 Sr. Field EHO position in Casa Grande.

**Environmental Health Support Center:** Bobby Villines. The EHSC Training Calendar is pretty much complete. He will send it out next week for final comments.

**Rockville:** Kelly Taylor, Darren Buchanan, Alan Dellapenna